

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Marshall Service District Planning Committee**  
**Comprehensive Plan Update**  
**Tri-County Feeds, Etc. 7408 John Marshall Highway, Marshall**  
**February 12, 2008 (7:00 p.m.)**

1. Summary of Main Street Discussion from January 22, 2008 meeting - Susan Eddy

Susan Eddy, Chief of Planning Fauquier County Community Development, opened the meeting with greetings and introductions. She noted that all the background materials were available online and that newcomers should sign up and provide their email to ensure that they receive emails in the future. Susan recapped the major discussion points from the prior meeting. She noted on her reference list of issues that the group seems to have come to a general agreement on some issues, while some remain outstanding.

There is general agreement that there is a need for alleys, on-street parking on Main Street, more street connectivity, landscaping, educational institutions, and the need to reserve a place for a school. Additionally, there was general agreement that the form-based code concepts needed to be incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan update to ensure consistency between the zoning and the Land Use Plan.

Mrs. Eddy noted that there is still room for discussion about railroad crossings and a timeline for public facilities. Rick Carr, Director of Community Development, stated that he was working with the Water and Sewer Authority (WSA) and other departments to formulate a timeline for those public facilities coming on line within the next five years as well as into the distant future. In the short term, this list would include improvements to Route 55, water lines, sewer lines, and various pump stations. The long range timeline will focus on major transportation improvements and water and sewer facilities.

Mrs. Eddy stated that she contacted the Fire Marshall about building height issues. Interestingly, the Fire Marshall stated that the Fire Department can better service buildings that are over 4 stories because sprinkler systems are required throughout the building. Inversely, their department faces greater service challenges with properties under three stories, since sprinklers are not required.

Peter Schwartz, Marshall District Supervisor, explained that it would be challenging to locate alleys on the south side of Main Street. However, there are some access points at Anderson Avenue that might present some opportunities to create partial alleys. This design issue needs further study.

## 2. Salem Avenue in the Current Comprehensive Plan

Susan Eddy stated that the current Comprehensive Plan designates Salem Avenue as “Mixed-Use” and that this concept needs further refinement in order to make that vision a reality. Is this still the vision? The area is currently zoned a mix of Residential-4 and Commercial-1.

## 3. Form-Based Code on Salem Avenue

Milt Herd, Planning Consultant, followed up on Mrs. Eddy’s remarks that it was his goal this evening to try to get the group thinking about what Salem Avenue should be in the future. Milt explained that the Form-Based Code currently being considered allows communities like Marshall to retain the traditional designs established in their town. In short, places like Marshall and Warrenton cannot be created under current zoning ordinances. Therefore, new ordinances, like the form-based code ordinance, are needed to ensure that new development and redevelopment replicate the existing land and development patterns. If Marshall completely redeveloped under the current zoning ordinance, it would look nothing like it does today. Instead, all of the buildings would be set back from the street with a sea of parking between the street and the storefront.

Mr. Herd presented a visual of the Salem

Avenue: <http://www.fauquiercounty.gov/documents/committees/MarshallSvcDist/minutes/HerdFormBased120507.pdf>

Mr. Herd stated that the road itself is currently only 20 feet wide in terms of paved area, but there is a 50 foot wide Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) easement. Most of that easement area is on the northern edge of Salem Avenue, with the paved area lying almost flush to the southern edge of the VDOT easement. Mr. Herd posed the question to the group as to what should the code say about how this road should ultimately look and function and what is the vision for the land uses along the road? The draft Form-Based Code specifies the goal to maintain the “current rural character.” Are the goals and visions for Salem spelled out in the draft Form-Based Code still applicable?

<http://www.fauquiercounty.gov/documents/committees/MarshallSvcDist/minutes/SalemAvenueFormBasedCode.pdf>

Mr. Herd presented the draft Form-Based Code provisions for Salem Road. He reviewed the proposed setbacks, lot coverage requirements, window and door opening requirements, as well as other items as described in the draft Form-Based Code for this area:

<http://www.fauquiercounty.gov/documents/committees/MarshallSvcDist/minutes/SalemAvenueFormBasedCode.pdf>

Mr. Herd noted the need for some general agreement about the streetscape. If the mature trees are to be retained, then the road needs to allow for “bump-outs” that allow for their preservation.

There were various responses to Mr. Herd's presentation. One citizen noted that on-street parking calms traffic. Another stated that he envisioned Salem properties similarly backing up to an alley between Salem and Main, and that the alley and the parking served by the alley would be heavily landscaped. Further, Salem Avenue should perhaps not be a commercial area but rather a mix of uses, should connect to Main Street via the front portion of the Fire House lot, and small buildings could also front the alley. The group agreed that the Form-Based Code needs to require garages to be behind the house frontage. People noted that Salem is a lot like the "back street" in Middleburg (Federal Street)

#### 4. Open Discussion of Salem Avenue (Topics to include length of Salem Avenue, uses, street design, alley, large tracts of land, parks, etc.)

Mr. Herd reviewed the draft use packages that would outline what would and would not be allowed within the Salem corridor.

<http://www.fauquiercounty.gov/documents/committees/MarshallSvcDist/minutes/SalemAvenueFormBasedCode.pdf>

There was an intense discussion about the draft list of uses, particularly about schools and where they should or shouldn't be located. Supervisor Schwartz promoted plans that incorporated a school into the downtown main street vision because this continues the historical development pattern that is sought within the Marshall Comprehensive Plan. Others believe the schools should be on the edges of the town (West end preferably) on larger properties so that they can be accessed more easily by cars.

Several community members felt that it was too early in the planning process to talk about uses. Mr. Herd explained that these debates are important in the process that a community needs to go through to decide what they want. He presented the Form-Based Code because it is a work in progress and provides an opportunity to coordinate the new plan and the draft code. Mr. Herd re-emphasized to the group that the existing zoning along Salem is quite incompatible with what the community wanted to have happen as established in the current plan.

One citizen expressed his concern that there seemed too be an excessive focus on residential development in this "service district" as well as all service districts. He thought there should be greater focus on the use of public utility provision for commercial and industrial uses and not residential. This citizen also felt that he wanted a stronger proof made for the need for a form-based code. Peter Schwartz explained that it was opportune timing to develop a form-based code for Marshall because as development incrementally occurs, the form-based code ensures that, at minimum; a building is designed and situated so that it conforms to the historical pattern of development in the community. For instance if a hotel decides to locate in Marshall, the hotel would have to be close to the road to continue the current town and street lay-out established in Marshall.

Several citizens talked about the need to establish a vision for a train stop, possibly along Route 66.

Mrs. Eddy clarified that there were two separate but related presentations at this meeting tonight. She explained that the group is being asked to evaluate the draft Form-Based Code as well as the associated Comprehensive Plan text. Susan said it is essential that the group and the County fully explain the vision for Salem in the Comprehensive Plan at the same time they work out the details of the Form-Based Code.

Mr. Herd moved into a discussion about Urban Design Issues. Described in the following materials: [http://www.fauquiercounty.gov/documents/committees/MarshallSvcDist/minutes/Salem\\_Ave\\_%20Design.pdf](http://www.fauquiercounty.gov/documents/committees/MarshallSvcDist/minutes/Salem_Ave_%20Design.pdf). These materials present how the plan envisions the area to slowly redevelop. The VDOT land north of Utterback Street may be offered for sale for town parking. These materials also illustrate existing vacant land within the core area between Main Street and Salem.

One citizen raised the concern that the draft Form-Based Code requirements for two-story front facades would seem to facilitate large oversized housing that is not consistent with the current character. There should be a way to allow and encourage the current character. The point was also raised that the current houses have spaces between them. Another citizen stated an opposing viewpoint; that the East end of Salem shouldn't be just small houses because it formed part of the core downtown area. The group also discussed the potential need for different standards for the eastern and western portions of Salem. Mr. Herd explained that these were important points to consider which is why the matter of the vision for Salem is on the table for discussion.

Another citizen noted that whatever is envisioned for the West end of Salem should consider the beautiful view. Several citizens turned the conversation to their concerns about how development along Salem as well as commercial development at the two gateways may dilute commercial vitality within the core town area that is already established.

Supervisor Schwartz addressed these concerns about drained vitality in the core area by noting that infrastructure provision and planning can be instrumental in guiding and timing redevelopment. He further explained that the group really did need to concur on a vision for Salem because, absent a vision, the area will develop as it is currently zoned instead of being properly planned. Mrs. Eddy, Supervisor Schwartz, and Mr. Herd all explained that the future discussions on transportation system will help to further flesh out the Salem Road vision within the context of a plan for 6,000 residents and a supporting water and sewer infrastructure and transportation infrastructure for the next five year, 25 years, and 50 years. Mr. Herd stated that street plans are often a town's critical defining feature. Paris and D.C. are both characterized by their boulevards and circles, New York and other Americans for their variated grid systems, and Charleston South Carolina is known for its village greens.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.